AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-49 (Cancelled)

50. Cancelled

51. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~50 characterised in that the reinforcing means is an elongated reinforcing means having a proximal end and a distal end, and preferably, the reinforcing means extends along at least a portion of the distal portion between the proximal end of the distal portion and the guide portion, and advantageously~~[[,]] 70 in which the distal end of the reinforcing ~~means~~ member is spaced apart from the distal end of the distal portion of the guide wire and defines with the distal end of the distal portion of the guide wire the guide portion thereof.

52. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~51 characterised in that~~ 70 in which the reinforcing ~~means~~ member extends from the proximal end of the distal portion[[,]]. ~~and preferably, the proximal end of the reinforcing means substantially coincides with the proximal end of the distal portion of the guide wire, and preferably, the reinforcing means extends in a generally axial direction.~~

53. Cancelled.

54. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~53 characterised in that the distal portion of the guide wire is of rectangular transverse cross-section defining a pair of opposite major flat surfaces, joined by a pair of opposite minor surfaces~~[[,]] 70 in which the major flat surfaces ~~defining~~ of the distal portion define a central major plane located midway between the major surfaces, and the minor surfaces ~~defining~~ of the distal portion define a central minor plane located midway between the minor surfaces[[,]]. ~~and advantageously, the reinforcing means is located on one of the major flat surfaces.~~

55. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~54 characterised in that~~ 70 in which one of the reinforcing ~~means~~ members is located on ~~both~~ each of the major flat surfaces[[,]]. ~~and preferably, the respective major flat surfaces converge towards each other towards the distal end of the distal portion.~~

56. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 54 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the transverse distance of the longitudinally extending edge of ~~each~~ the reinforcing ~~means~~ members from the central major plane is substantially constant along the reinforcing means.

57. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 54 ~~characterised in that each~~ in which the reinforcing ~~means~~ member extends parallel to the central minor plane[[,]]. ~~and preferably, each reinforcing means coincides with the central minor plane.~~

58. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 54 ~~characterised in that each~~ in which the reinforcing ~~means~~ member extends at an angle greater than zero degrees to the central minor plane[[,]]. ~~and preferably, each reinforcing means extends adjacent one of the minor surfaces, and preferably, one reinforcing means extends from each of the major flat surfaces, one of the reinforcing means extending adjacent one of the minor surfaces, and the other reinforcing means extending adjacent the other minor surface.~~

59. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~51 characterised in that each reinforcing means comprises an elongated reinforcing member, and preferably, each~~ 70 in which the reinforcing member defines opposite longitudinally extending sides, ~~and preferably~~[[,]] the opposite longitudinally extending sides of ~~each~~ the reinforcing member ~~terminate~~ terminating along the longitudinally extending edge thereof.

60. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 59 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the opposite longitudinally extending sides of ~~each~~ the reinforcing member are parallel to each other[[,]]. ~~or alternatively, the opposite longitudinally extending sides of each reinforcing member converge towards the longitudinally extending edge thereof for defining the longitudinally extending edge as a longitudinally extending ridge, and preferably, the longitudinally extending edge of each reinforcing member converges towards the distal portion adjacent the distal end of the reinforcing member.~~

61. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~50 characterised in that each~~ 70 in which the reinforcing ~~means~~ member is integrally formed with the distal portion[[,]] of the guide wire. ~~and each reinforcing means and the distal portion are of metal and may be formed by forging from a single piece of metal, or by rolling from a single piece of metal.~~

62. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~50 characterised in that~~ 70 in which the distal portion of the guide wire extends through a sleeve, and a first securing means at the distal end thereof secures the distal portion to the sleeve, the first securing means defining the distal end of the guide wire.

63. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 62 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the first securing means is shaped to form a dome shaped distal end for facilitating passage of the guide wire smoothly through a vessel of the subject.

64. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 62 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the guide portion is located between ~~each~~ the reinforcing ~~means~~ member and the first securing means.

65. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 62 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the first securing means comprises one of a solder joint, an adhesive joint, ~~or~~ and a brazed joint.

66. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 62 ~~characterised in that~~ in which the sleeve extends beyond the proximal end of the distal portion along a portion of the guide wire, and ~~preferably~~[[,]] a proximal end of the sleeve is secured to the guide wire by a second securing means[[,]] ~~and the second securing means may comprise~~ comprising one of an adhesive joint, a solder joint, ~~or~~ and a brazed joint[[,]]. ~~and advantageously, the sleeve is secured to the guide wire at at least one intermediate location intermediate the proximal end and the distal end of the sleeve by an intermediate securing means, and preferably, the intermediate securing means comprises one of an adhesive joint, a solder joint, or a brazed joint, and advantageously, at least a portion of the sleeve adjacent the distal end thereof is of a radiopaque material, and preferably, the sleeve comprises a tightly wound coiled spring of a metal material, or a tubular member, which preferably, is of plastics material, or alternatively, the sleeve is formed from alternate portions of the tightly wound coiled spring and the tubular member, and preferably, at least a portion of the sleeve is formed from one or more of the following materials or alloys thereof:~~

~~platinum,~~

~~gold,~~

~~tantalum.~~

67. (Currently amended) A guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~50 characterised in that~~ 70 in which the guide wire is substantially torsionally rigid between the distal portion and the proximal portion of the guide wire for minimising axial twisting of the guide wire between the proximal portion thereof and the guide portion[[,]]. ~~and preferably, a portion of the guide wire~~

~~adjacent the distal portion thereof tapers towards the distal portion, and advantageously, the distal portion of the guide wire and the guide wire are integrally formed from one piece of material.~~

68. (Currently amended) A distal portion for a guide wire of the type for use in a surgical or other procedure for accessing a remote site in the body of a human or animal subject, the guide wire defining a longitudinally extending axis, and the distal portion having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the distal portion being adapted for securing to the guide wire, the distal portion terminating in a guide portion adjacent the distal end thereof, the guide portion being adapted to be shaped to a desired curved configuration for facilitating guiding of the guide wire into a branched vessel of the subject, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the distal portion is of rectangular transverse cross-section defining a pair of opposite major flat surfaces, joined by a pair of opposite minor surfaces, and a reinforcing means is provided on the distal portion for minimising axial twisting of the distal portion between a proximal end of the distal portion and the guide portion thereof[[.]], the reinforcing means comprising an elongated reinforcing member extending between a proximal end and a distal end, and being located on one of the flat major surfaces, and extending along at least a portion of the distal portion between the proximal end of the distal portion and the guide portion.

69. (Currently amended) In combination a catheter and the guide wire as claimed in Claim ~~50~~ 70.

Please add the following new claims:

70. (New) A guide wire for use in a surgical or other procedure for accessing a remote site in the body of a human or animal subject, the guide wire defining a longitudinally extending axis, and terminating at one end in a proximal portion, and at an opposite end in a distal portion for accessing the remote site, the distal portion being of rectangular transverse cross-section defining a pair of opposite major flat surfaces, joined by a pair of opposite minor surfaces, and terminating adjacent a distal end thereof in a guide portion, the guide portion being adapted to be shaped to a desired curved configuration for facilitating guiding of the guide wire into a branched vessel of the subject, wherein a reinforcing means is provided on the distal portion for minimising axial twisting of the distal portion between a proximal end of the distal portion and the guide portion thereof, the reinforcing means comprising an elongated reinforcing member having a proximal end and a distal end, and being located on one of the flat major surfaces, and extending along at least a portion of the distal portion between the proximal end of the distal portion and the guide portion.

71. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 70 in which the reinforcing member extends in a generally axial direction.

72. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 70 in which the respective major flat surfaces converge towards each other towards the distal end of the distal portion.

73. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 54 in which the reinforcing member coincides with the central minor plane.

74. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 70 in which the reinforcing member extends adjacent one of the minor surfaces.

75. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 59 in which the opposite longitudinally extending sides of the reinforcing member converge towards the longitudinally extending edge thereof for defining the longitudinally extending edge as a longitudinally extending ridge.

76. (New) A guide wire as claimed in Claim 59 in which the longitudinally extending edge of the reinforcing member converges towards the distal portion adjacent the distal end of the reinforcing member.